



# WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. OF L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS.

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

HEADQUARTERS

801-809 G ST. N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.

FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY

SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT

No. 32.

## WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION COMMISSION

### Prominent Labor Men Attending Sessions and Aid by Valuable and Pertinent Suggestions.

Washington, Nov. 11.—While the Congressional Employers' Liability and Workmen's Compensation Commission are agreed on many of the main features of a plan of compensation to be presented to the coming session of Congress, yet there are many important details which are yet to be worked out. Sessions are now being held and the representatives of the employers and of labor are in attendance. Prominent among those appearing before the Commission was President Gompers, John Garretson, of the Railway Conductors, W. L. Lee of the Railway Trainmen, Timothy Healy, of the Stationary Firemen, and others. One of the main questions is the method and composition of an awarding tribunal. President Gompers, in a large measure, endorsed the Commission's plan of insuring railroad employees against accident, but was emphatic in his opinion relative to the question of administration. He insisted that the tribunals should consist of one representing the employer, another representing the employees, while the third should be a physician of good standing and acceptable to the other two representatives. The Commission suggested the idea of placing the power of selection of awarding boards with the Federal courts, to which Mr. Gompers replied: "To confer this authority on the courts is equivalent to saying that the courts are not governed by politics, and I am not sure that this is always the case." He added that he did not believe as a rule the courts were prompted by improper motives, but said that the environment and education of most judges are such as to render them incapable of correctly determining questions pertaining to industrial life. He also urged the abandonment of the idea of remunerating injured employees by the payment of lump sums, arguing that generally the workman, having had no experience in commercial life, with the ever decreasing opportunities for the survival of small business enterprises, with failure almost certain in a large percentage of cases, the stated compensation plan was the most humane to the injured employee and beneficial to society. It was also urged that the plan or scheme should be so formulated as to cover all railroads, and contributions go to a common fund, combatting the idea presented by the Commission, that each railroad or system be responsible only for the accidents occurring on its lines. The idea involved is, that the better equipped and safer roads will become a force in compelling the poorly equipped roads to bring their equipment and safety devices up to that of the better equipped roads.

## THE BIG RAILROAD STRIKE

The Large Number of Employees Now Out on Big Railroad Systems Are Standing Loyal and Firm.

Chicago, Nov. 11.—"The federation of the mechanical trades on the Harriman lines, which includes the Illinois Central, has entered upon the fifth week of the strike." Says J. W. Kline, International President of the Blacksmiths and Helpers, "and the men are contending for the right to transact their business with these great corporations through a federated committee. The demands that have been made do not establish a precedent, as the federation has been recognized by a number of railroads. The officials of the Harriman lines undoubtedly have been selected by the General Managers' Association of the West, backed by the interests to fight this battle, at any cost, to disrupt the trade unions involved. The employees of the Harriman lines, actuated by the spirit of Americanism and loyalty to their organization, determined to contest this attack upon the rights of organized labor. It has been stated that many daily papers along the Harriman lines have been purchased and that they have attacked the employees and misrepresented the situation. In some places page advertisements have been run, booklets issued and other reading matter distributed to the public, setting forth that the employees have made unreasonable demands. On behalf of the strikers, it is urged that the labor Press give this strike all the publicity possible. We have asked that the company meet the committees as a federated body, and so far as the other demands are concerned, that will be a matter to be discussed in conference and no doubt an amicable adjustment can be made. This controversy was the result of the attitude of the Harriman officials, and the strike was forced upon the employees by higher officials of this system—as Julius Kruttschnitt stated to the committee, consisting of the general officers of the organizations involved, that he was following the instructions of President Lovett and the Board of Directors. It is clearly a fight of the interests against organized labor with their usual injunctions, but all we desire is fair play, and with a square deal we will win the contest."

## RAILWAYMEN DETERMINED

Employees of English Railways Oppose, Almost Unanimously, Report of the Royal Commission.

London, Nov. 11.—When the Royal Commission, otherwise named the Railway Inquiry Commission, was appointed to make an effort to adjust the differences which existed between the railroads and the employees, and the great strike called off pending a report, it was confidently expected that the grievances of the men would be satisfactorily adjusted. It appears, however, that the report of the Commission is unsatisfactory to all the men, the report even going so far as to deny the right of the employees' organizations to be recognized by the railroad companies. Practically all labor men are a unit in their criticism of the report. As a result a great strike among the railway employees at this time is imminent unless an adjustment is reached very shortly. The question of wages is very serious, but it is stated that the railroad companies are about to issue revised schedules of wages for certain classes of their workmen. It is also understood that the revised schedules do not relate to all classes of workmen. The condition at this time is very critical.

## CANADIAN INNOVATION

Injunction Method Inaugurated in the Dominion of Canada by a Judge Restraining a Commission of Inquiry.

Montreal, Can. Nov. 11.—American judicial methods are being inaugurated in this city. Recently the street railway employees formed an organization; the company, as is usual, in its efforts to destroy the union, discharged 40 of the men who had become members. Immediately following, the officials of the union, exercising their right under the Lemieux Act, otherwise known as the Industrial Disputes Act, demanded a commission of inquiry. This commission was accordingly appointed; the members of the Street Railwaymen's union selecting their representatives, the company and the Government doing likewise. Then followed a turn in the affairs, the company, on advice of its solicitors, going into court and asking that a restraining order be issued forbidding the Commission from sitting and exercising its functions under the Dominion law. The point raised by the attorneys for the company was that the Dominion Parliament had no legal right to interfere in what was termed Provincial rights. In other words, it was contended that there was a conflict between what in the United States, would be termed Federal and State rights. The injunction was granted and is now pending an appeal. This case is exceedingly unique and emphasizes the contention that the judiciary is endeavoring to extend its scope of authority and even to annul statute law. Canada having no written constitution, the acts of the Dominion Parliament have been at least assumed to be supreme; the judge himself being a creature and subordinate to the laws of the Dominion Parliament.

## TRACKMEN GET RAISE

Roanoke, Va., Nov. 11.—The Maintenance of Way Employees employed by the Norfolk and Western road have just secured an agreement which increases the wages of the Maintenance men on that road \$175,000 per year. The controversy now existing between the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton R. R. and the Maintenance of Way men has been referred to a Board of Arbitration, and it is expected that the award will be favorable to the men. The strike of the Maintenance of Way men on the Lackawanna is bringing forth good results, as it has been announced by the officials that they are going to grant a "voluntary" increase to their trackmen. The Maintenance of Way men have made a splendid fight for better conditions over the entire country, and where the men are organized they have invariably, not only increased their wages, but bettered their working conditions.

## HIGH WATER MARK REACHED

Washington, Nov. 11.—The increase in membership of the American Federation of Labor during the fiscal year, 1911, with the addition of 51,300 members which came with the affiliation of the Western Federation of Miners, forced the average paid up and reported membership up to 1,756,735. This is an increase of 194,623 over the membership of 1910, and 80,535 members over the previous high water mark of 1904. The American Federation of Labor to-day has the largest membership ever in its history, is physically stronger, its effectiveness greater, and its prospects for the coming year most flattering.

## TAYLOR SYSTEM AGAIN

James O'Connell, President of the International Association of Machinists, Declares Men Will Oppose it.

Washington, Nov. 11.—"If the Taylor System is put into operation in Government shops by Secretary Stimson, as he has stated, one of two things will result—either Congress will enact legislation relieving machinists of the unjust rigor of the so-called scientific shop management, or there will be a cessation of work. The men employed in the shops of the Navy Department are high grade workmen and compare well with the standard of the average American machinist, who is acknowledged to be without a peer in any country. There is nothing new in the Taylor system. It is simply parts of old systems welded together by Mr. Taylor. All its features, timing of particular jobs, regulation of raw material, bonuses, etc., have been put in operation in various places years ago. It simply resolves itself into driving the workmen. The machinists have no objection to having their work facilitated by the introduction of any system that will enable them to turn out work faster, by reason of having material made more available, or by having proper tools placed conveniently near them. The proposition however, of taking a highly proficient man working under advantageous conditions, and computing the time he spends on specified jobs and making it a standard, is unjust as well as faulty for many reasons. Chief among them is that there is no set standard. After one has been fixed and it is attained by the men by straining, it is raised by some few workmen better equipped physically, and, instead of having attained the goal, as he supposed, the average workman is informed that the state of efficiency he has reached is no longer the standard; that it has been raised."

## BEFORE FEDERAL GRAND JURY

Indianapolis, Nov. 11.—Judge Joseph T. Markey of the criminal court, has granted the petition of the United States, asking that the evidence held by Marion County in the McNamara case, be submitted to the Federal Grand Jury, in order that alleged violations of the criminal laws of the United States may be investigated. The judge also allowed the California authorities to photograph the dynamite, nitroglycerin and clocks which were confiscated at the time of J. J. McNamara's arrest. The judge reserved decision, however, as to whether he would permit the California authorities to photograph the books and other records. The prosecution in Los Angeles is endeavoring to have all of the alleged evidence taken to Los Angeles while the authorities in Marion County, Indiana, are combatting the effort.

## STRIKE WON IN TWO HOURS

London, Nov. 11.—As the result of a strike of the Great Western Railway shunters at Ilanally, which lasted for two hours, a conference was held with the Division Superintendent and the men were granted eight hour shifts and an increase in wages, the demands being conceded in full.

San Diego, Cal. Nov. 11.—Circulars have been sent into the eastern states from this city stating that there was a shortage of men in the building crafts. This statement is untrue and not in accord with the facts, there being no extra work at this time.

## INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM

This Modern Legislative Method on Trial Before the United States Supreme Court.

Washington, Nov. 11.—The Initiative and referendum is up before the United States Supreme Court to be tested as to its constitutionality. The original case comes from Portland, Ore. Attorneys from San Francisco and Portland recently appeared before the highest tribunal in this country, in opposition to the initiative and referendum. It was contended by the attorneys opposing this method that there could not, with due regard to the Federal constitution, be two legislative powers in a State, namely, the Legislature and the people. It was further contended that taxes imposed under the initiative and referendum were not by due "process of law", and violated "the equal protection of the law," so long as some persons were taxed under the initiative laws and others under legislative enactments. During the arguments before the court in opposition to the initiative and referendum method the attorneys were closely questioned by Justice Burton and Chief Justice White. The questions and demeanor of the judges were critical and indicated that their minds were not in harmony with the argument being adduced. A number of prominent attorneys appeared in defense of the initiative and referendum making splendid arguments for its retention as a legislative method in our scheme of government. It was the opinion of those who were in attendance during the arguments, that the Supreme Court will undoubtedly sustain the constitutionality of this most beneficent act.

## RAILWAYS BUYING EQUIPMENT

New York, Nov. 11.—It is reported that there is an increase in the orders placed by railroads for new equipment. During the last five weeks various railroads have placed contracts for 25,000 cars. Lower prices on steel product, such as bars, plates, shapes and wire products are reported.

## RAILROAD ACCIDENTS

Washington, Nov. 11.—The Interstate Commerce Commission has just issued its statement on railroad accidents for the last fiscal year. It shows that there has been one employe killed to every 458 employed. This is the first statement of a year's record of accidents under the law of May 6, 1910. It shows the total number of casualties for the year ending June 30, 1911, to be 160,555—10,396 killed and 150,159 injured. Of this number 439 killed and 79,237 injured are classed under the head of industrial accidents which do not involve the moving of cars or engines on rails. A total of 5,287 persons were killed and 5,614 were injured while trespassing on property of railroads. There is a notable decrease in the number of passengers killed as compared with the previous year, being 356 against 421. Accidents on electric lines carrying interstate traffic show that there were 410 persons killed and 3,264 injured during the year exclusive of industrial accidents. There were 10 employes killed and 399 injured on the premises of the companies, in which accidents no movement of car or engine was involved. The bulletin gives the total number of employes in the service of railroad companies as 1,648,033.

## BIG MASS MEETING PLANNED

New York, Nov. 11.--The United States Civil Service Retirement Association has arranged a mass meeting to be held at the Hippodrome on Sunday afternoon, November 19, for the purpose of bringing to the attention of Congress and the public the injustice of the present system of Federal employment, where men and women after spending from thirty to fifty years in the Government service, and are, through age or ill health, no longer able to render the efficient service formerly given, are being dropped from the rolls without any provision. The salaries paid are not generous enough to provide for the declining period of life. There has been introduced in this session of Congress a Bill providing for the retirement of superannuated Federal Civil Service employes after thirty or more years service, with an annuity or compensation for faithful and continuous work. It is the hope of the Association that it will be able to muster sufficient strength to have this Bill passed during the present session of Congress.

## ARBITRATION FOR STREET RAILWAYMEN

Augusta, Ga., Nov. 11.--The street car service of this city, which was tied up for over 24 hours, has been resumed pending the arbitration of differences between the men and the company. The strike was precipitated by the discharge of four men "for disloyalty to the company", the result of an effort of the employes of the Augusta-Aiken Railway, an electric corporation, to form a union. The company attempted to break up the newly formed organization by discharging the men taking a prominent part in the movement. The merchants of Augusta circulated a petition urging that the difficulty be settled, and as a result, an agreement was reached to submit the question of wages and conditions to arbitration.

## FREE TEXT BOOKS

Nashville, Tenn., Nov. 11.--The Board of Education has adopted a plan whereby the free text book system will be inaugurated in the city schools. The committee having the matter under consideration recommended that plans should be made to inaugurate this system in 1912, by introducing at least two grades each year until the pupils of every grade in the grammar schools have free books. It is stated that this action will have the effect of largely increasing the attendance in the public schools. The Board also has under consideration the matter of a pension for school teachers.

## THE INSURANCE BILL

London, Nov. 11.--Reynolds newspaper has this to say in reference to the Insurance Bill: "If the Insurance Bill is to pass at all, and no one in the House of Commons professes to wish to see it defeated, some limit must be placed upon the continuation of debate. The closure is an unwelcome device, but the Government had no option. After 16 more days discussion on the committee stage of the health insurance part it must come to an end. In the meantime, the unemployment section is to be sent to a standing committee for separate treatment. In all, the Bill will have had 36 or 37 days discussion. Few bills have ever received so ample an allowance."



## AUSTIN DAM

Washington, Nov. 11.—If appearances count for anything, it looks as if some one would have to pay a heavy penalty for the Austin dam tragedy. An investigation has practically shown that the tragedy was not an act of Providence, in the sense that it was unavoidable. It is claimed that the dam was constructed in a faulty fashion, and that its foundation was restricted ten feet less than the original plans contemplated, and that the bed rock key was omitted, and even after the weakness of the structure had become apparent, nothing was done toward making it safe. It is alleged that up to the present time there has been a preponderance of evidence to the effect that the accident was due to criminal negligence. It is the duty of the state of Pennsylvania to make sure that the guilty persons are punished and that the hundreds of persons at Austin who have been made homeless and whose families have been destroyed are given justice.

## RELIEF ASSOCIATIONS

Washington, Nov. 11.—The Railroad Employees' Relief Associations, it is stated, will not be disturbed by the proposed Employers' Liability Legislation to be submitted to Congress this winter by the Congressional Committee on Employers' Liability and Workmen's Compensation. Several roads that have their own relief associations were anxious to know what Congress would expect of them, and several representatives of these roads met with Senator Sutherland, Chairman of the Committee, who told them that the proposed legislation would not interfere with the roads' individual plans if, after investigation, they were found to be satisfactory. It is claimed that the railroads interested have relief association liabilities amounting to two hundred millions, and some of the Associations have been in operation for 25 years. The assurance of the Chairman of the Committee, however, is only tentative because Congress will have the last word on this important measure.

## MAKES APOLOGY

Indianapolis, Nov. 11.—The suit instituted by President James M. Lynch, of the International Typographical Union, against the editor of the Michigan Tradesmen at Grand Rapids, for \$25,000 damages, has been settled. The editor of the publication has made a public apology in his paper and assumed the court costs. The paper in question made a libelous statement practically charging Mr. Lynch with the responsibility for the Los Angeles Times catastrophe.

## TURNED DOWN BY GOVERNOR

Los Angeles, Nov. 11.—"Paris Green" Otis has been smashed again. When President Taft was in this city, Otis endeavored to "make friends" with Governor Johnson. It is well known that the Governor is bitterly opposed to the methods of the union buster, but nothing daunted Otis endeavor to seek an introduction, but the Governor when approached, said, "No, no, take him away; I do not care to know that man." This rebuff is similar to many that the "Colonel" is now receiving from many quarters.

## STRIKE AT BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham, Eng.,--Nov. 11.--Recently 400 men, women and girls came out on strike at the Birmingham small arms factory. They had demanded an extra shilling a week and the firm was apparently in favor of conceding this on condition that the men work two hours extra a week, 52 instead of 50 hours. This being refused the workers quit; they subsequently induced other workers to join with them so that now over three thousand are out. It is stated also that the work being done by men in other shops is being done at the Birmingham factory by girls. Since the strike has been entered upon the question of unionists working with non-unionists has also been brought to the fore and will be settled before the strike is over.

## LACE WORKERS

Nottingham, Eng., Nov. 11.--Serious trouble is brewing among the lace workers. Recently the trade board fixed a minimum rate for lace workers and now it is stated that a number of the workers are being asked to "contract out" for six months and accept less than the minimum 2½ d. per hour. This action is taken by the middle women, but some of the best employes do not countenance the coercion that is being attempted. An appeal is being issued on behalf of the lace workers for funds.

## MINERS RESTLESS

London, Nov. 11.--There is no abatement in the feeling that a national strike of miners is imminent. There are many grievances and they will very soon be brought to a head owing to the fact that no agreement seems possible to be reached between the coal operators and miners. The Miners' Federation has practically agreed that the minimum wage for which they are contending should vary in certain districts, but the operators have not yet come to this view, although it is a modification of the original demand put forth. The Northumberland Miners are demanding a minimum wage of thirty per cent above the basis of 1879, as well as the abolition of the three shift system. Other trouble is on in Wales over the non-unionists working in the pits. The Lancashire and Cheshire Miners' Federation and the Coal Operators' Association are now in negotiation. The South Wales Miners Federation is also demanding an increase of 1½ per cent on the standard rate of wages.

## LONDON TRAMWAYMEN

London, Nov. 11.--For a considerable time the London Tramwaymen have been urging an increase in wages and a better system of working. It has been agreed to do away as far as possible with the "spread over" time system; the wages of point shifters are to be raised from 26s. to 27s.; strappers from 28s. to 29s.; drivers who are learning are to receive half pay for three weeks, and conductors for two weeks--this was formerly unpaid for. There is also to be double pay on Christmas day, and time and a quarter for rest day calls, unless 24 hours' notice has been given. The employes did not receive all that was demanded, but feel gratified over the raise received.



## FRATERNAL DELEGATES

Representatives of British Trade Union Congress Arrive and Will Proceed to Atlanta, Ga. This Week.

Washington, Nov. 11.—G. H. Roberts, M. P., organizer for the Typographical Association of Great Britain, and J. Orinon, J. P., President of the Cardroom Workers' Amalgamation, fraternal delegates from the British Trade Union Congress to the convention of the American Federation of Labor, reached New York on November 3rd. The Cotton Factory Times in its last issue remarked: "To be sent to America as a fraternal delegate to the annual convention of the American Federation of Labor in America, is regarded as the Blue Ribbon of the Trade Union movement in England. This honor has frequently been conferred upon Textile delegates before, but Mr. Orinon is the first to be elected without opposition." It is understood that Mr. Roberts will address a number of Typographical Unions, and Mr. Orinon will also address a number of Textile organizations in this country.

## SPEEDING UP IN ENGLAND

London, Nov. 11.—A number of cases have recently been called to the attention of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Workers' Operatives where employers have handed the control of their lasting and finishing rooms over to a machine company. In each instance not only has friction resulted, but attempts have been made to cut down wages and also to speed up and thereby increase the output. It is stated that the machine companies, in order to dispose of their product, promised impossible outputs. The manufacturers naturally desired a demonstration, and in order to demonstrate, machine companies have demanded that absolute control of the factory be turned over. This method is similar to the Taylor and Emerson systems in America, and if there is a continuation serious labor difficulties will follow.

## UNION PRINTERS WIN

Poughkeepsie, N. Y., Nov. 11.—The union printers have won a victory in their fight against a local printing concern. In submitting bids for the printing of ballots for the general election the firm referred to was low bidder and when the contract was prepared it was drawn up in accordance with the law and the rules governing union labor—eight hours per day, etc. To this the firm objected and applied to the courts for a mandamus compelling the election Commission to award the contract with the eight hour clause eliminated. The court held that the law was plainly in favor of the contention of the Printers' Union; that the public printing must be done under eight hours and the pay of employes must be in accordance with the prevailing rate pay.

## NECKWEAR MAKERS WIN

New York, Nov. 11.—Practically all of the neckwear manufacturers have conceded the demand made by the Neckwear Makers' Union and signed agreements for one year. A great number of contractors also have signed agreements and the trade is now practically at peace.

### UNCLE SAM'S COAL MINE

Washington, Nov. 11.—As an auxiliary to an irrigation project the Department of the Interior has gone into the coal business at Williston, N. D. The Government owns and operates a coal mine. It is stated that the conditions under which the miners live and work are good. The eight hour day prevails, six days a week, and the miners are enabled to make \$100 a month. It is said that on an average the miners make about \$5. a day, the schedule being 60 cents a ton for room work; 70 cents in ten foot entries, and 80 cents in seven foot entries. The cost of the coal to the Government approximates \$1.60 a ton, while the retail price of coal in Williston is \$2.50. It has been sought to devise a model mine with adequate exists, so that entombment is considered impossible; modern safety appliances have been installed, while a system of ventilation has been put in by which the air in tunnels two thousand feet under ground is considered to be kept almost as fresh as on the surface.

### POSTMEN'S GRIEVANCES

London, Nov. 11.—The Postmaster-General promised a deputation that he would bring before the House of Commons the grievances of the postmen. G. H. Stuart, the Chairman of the Postmen's Federation, is urging the immediate appointment of a select committee to inquire into the claims and grievances of the postal employees. As is well known, the cost of living has been considerably increased, with no adequate advance in wages in the postal service to meet this, and it is also admitted that work has also greatly increased. The employees are especially desirous that the condition be remedied as soon as possible.

### STEEL CARS SAVE LIVES

Raleigh, N. C., Nov. 11.—That passengers on the Seaboard Air Lines, Florida Limited, wrecked at Merry Oaks recently, with 18 injured escaped more serious casualties, has been pronounced a miracle. Steel cars were responsible for the saving of lives, the entire train except the engine being derailed. This demonstrates that the contention of the Postal Employees for steel cars is indeed, well founded.

### FOREIGN LABEL CAMPAIGN

London, Nov. 11.—The National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives, having adopted a label to be placed upon the product of its members, has instituted an active label campaign. Union labels in this country are few and the agitation being carried on by the Boot and Shoe Workers is therefore, to some extent, novel.

### DYERS ON STRIKE

Pendleton, Eng. Nov. 11.—The strike of 180 dyers which occurred a short time ago, is still in progress. There is a deadlock in negotiations, but no doubt a conference will be held shortly. The firm against which the strike is directed has been unable to get a single employe to desert the organization or find any one to take the places of the strikers.